Politics 335 : The Politics of the Body as Territory

The body-land territory is a political proposal developed by the Maya-Xinka communitarian feminist Lorena Cabnal, which argues the body is a living and historic territory that has a vital relationship to the places we inhabit and that records our situated memories of oppression, resistance and empowerment. Moving away from Western cartography, Cabnal conceptualizes "territory" from an Indigenous cosmogonic standpoint to highlight the vital relationship between bodies and land, and how both are concrete spaces where meaning and life is constructed and recreated. This proposal has had a major influence on Latin American feminist and environmental movements in the last decade. From movements organized against oil and mining projects, to feminist congresses or strikes adopting the label of "body as territory," activists and academics have adopted and adapted this proposal into their agendas. In this course, we analyze the politics behind the translation of this Indigenous proposal. By following the different adaptations and transformations of this proposal in anti-extractive movements like the Colectivo Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo in Ecuador or feminist platforms like the Feminist Strike in Argentina, we will examine the political effects of Indigenous thinking, theory and practice on these movements and spaces of organizing. At the same time, we will analyze what these varied translations leave out and what underlying asymmetric relations of power they conceal.

Credits 4